

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

**1. Name of Property**Historic name: Leroy and Carrie Christensen HouseOther names/site number: Las Vegas Catholic WorkerName of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**2. Location**Street & number: 500 W. Van Buren StreetCity or town: Las Vegas State: Nevada County: ClarkNot For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_national \_\_\_statewide \_\_\_local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_A \_\_\_B \_\_\_C \_\_\_D

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of certifying official/Title:****Date**\_\_\_\_\_  
**State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of commenting official:****Date**\_\_\_\_\_  
**Title :****State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government**

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

---

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register  
☐ removed from the National Register  
☐ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

---

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

---

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☒
- Public – Local ☐
- Public – State ☐
- Public – Federal ☐

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒
- District ☐
- Site ☐
- Structure ☐
- Object ☐

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>                    </u>	buildings
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	sites
<u>                    </u>	<u>2</u>	structures
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register                     

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/civic

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

---

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>  
CENTURY REVIVALS/  
French Eclectic

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: CONCRETE  
Walls: WOOD; CONCRETE; STONE  
Roof: ASPHALT; WOOD  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Narrative Description

### Summary Paragraph

The Leroy and Carrie Christensen House (Christensen House) is a one-and-one-half-story French Eclectic style residence constructed by the home's original owner, Leroy Christensen, in 1938. The building is wood-frame with a concrete foundation and a basement. The cross-gabled roof has a steep pitch with a front gable extension on the western portion of the south (front) façade that creates a modest L-shape. The exterior walls are clad in rock face concrete block, stone, and stucco. A distinctive round, stone rubble, masonry tower is present on the south (front) façade, near the home's front entry. The lot surrounding the house is thickly vegetated with mesquite and olive trees, which partially screen the residence from the public right-of-way. The Christensen House retains its integrity of location, feeling, and association, as well as the majority of its integrity of design and workmanship. Alterations to the building's exterior, modern construction on the home's periphery, and demolitions and new development affecting the surrounding urban landscape have compromised its integrity of materials and setting.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

## **Narrative Description**

### Location and Setting

The Christensen House is located in the Westside neighborhood of Las Vegas, Nevada. The Westside is a mixed-income, African American community that reached its peak in the 1940s and 1950s. The house is situated on the northwest corner of N. E Street and W. Van Buren Avenue within the H.F.M. and M Addition of Las Vegas. It sits on a 0.19-acre rectangular lot and is surrounded by scattered residential development and vacant lots. A concrete sidewalk extends around the south (front) and east sides of the property, while a paved alley runs east-west along the north (rear) of the lot. The house is setback approximately 77 feet from the south property line. A small, square, wood-frame storage building is located in the southeast (front) corner of the lot, and a small, rectangular, wood-frame garbage shelter is located in the northeast (rear) corner of the lot. Landscaping around the property consists of mesquite and olive trees located in the south (front) of the lot, as well as wood planting beds situated on the south and east sides of the house. A winding concrete path connects the sidewalk along W. Van Buren Avenue to the front (south) porch. The north (rear) end of the lot is covered in concrete and a concrete patio is located on the west façade. A sign reading “The Christensen Home, One of the oldest homes in Las Vegas built by Elder & Mrs. LeRoy Lyle Christensen in 1933” and “Take Pride in the Westside” is affixed to the chain link fence which encircles the property. A Pioneer Trail marker denoting the property’s historic significance is located immediately southeast of the residence at the intersection of W. Van Buren Avenue and N. E Street.

Historically, the Christensen property included a swimming pool located just west of the house on the adjacent lot. Today, the former pool location is occupied by 502 W. Adams, a house built in 2005 by the owners of the Christensen House (the Las Vegas Catholic Worker organization).

### Exterior

The Christensen House was constructed in the French Eclectic architectural style in 1938.<sup>1</sup> The building is a one-and-one-half-story, 2,990-square foot residence oriented with its front façade facing W. Van Buren Avenue to the south. The house has an L-shaped footprint, with a side-gabled main volume and a front-gabled volume at the west side that includes a projecting front ell. The house features masonry construction with rock-faced concrete block, rubble stone, and stucco and a concrete foundation. Its cross-gabled roof is clad in composition shingles and has little to no eave overhang. A large exterior stone chimney is located at the west elevation. Notable decorative elements include an engaged masonry tower near the center of the front façade, subtle faux half-timbering in several gable ends, roof dormers, and concrete lintels with keystones over several windows. The house represents the towered subtype of the French Eclectic style, which is easily identifiable by the presence of a prominent, round tower with a high, conical roof.

---

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the Clark County Assessor’s Office lists a construction date of 1912 for the residence; however, this is likely the build date for an existing building that was present on the property at the time the Christensen House was constructed.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

The front elevation faces south and consists of three distinct sections: the side-gabled main building volume at the east end of the façade, the shallow front ell at the west end, and an engaged round tower near the center of the façade. The main entry is located on the east side of the house's front-gabled ell. The entry is accessed via a historic front porch consisting of a low, rubble masonry porch wall with a concrete cap. The uncovered porch is approximately 220 ft<sup>2</sup> and has a single concrete step. The round masonry tower is also constructed of random rubble masonry and has a conical roof clad in wood shingles. The tower is attached to the southeast corner of the front ell. Fenestration on the front elevation is varied. The main building volume has a single window opening with non-historic sash at its far east end, and a pair of wood-frame, multi-lite French doors providing access to the porch. The front roof plane on this section contains a shed-roofed dormer with two one-over-one sash windows. The projecting ell has a large, steel-frame, multi-lite window centered on its lower story and a single window with non-historic sash and decorative shutters in its gable end. The tower has one small, three-lite, wood casement window that faces south. Each of the windows and doors on the front façade has a concrete lintel with decorative keystone.

The east (side) elevation faces North E Street. The central section of this elevation is underneath the building's wide gable end. The first floor of the central section has rusticated, rock-faced concrete block walls and a single -leaf entry near the center that was later infilled with wood and a non-historic window. The former door opening retains its concrete steps. To the south of this side entry is a larger window opening with replacement sash. Both the former entry and the window opening have concrete lintels and keystones. To the north of the entry is a stuccoed, three-sided, projecting bay with wood casement windows and a wood-shingle roof. One of the window openings on the projecting bay has a window air-conditioning unit instead of window sash. On the upper floor, the gable end is clad in stucco and contains a wide window opening with non-historic sash, stylized half-timbering, and a louvered attic vent with a pointed top. At the south end of the east elevation, the front porch wall and projecting front ell and main entry are visible. At the north end of the east elevation is the east wall of a shed-roofed enclosed porch or rear addition. The east wall of this rear addition contains a non-historic multi-lite window.

The west (side) elevation consists of the west wall of the front-gabled intersecting volume, plus the west wall of a small historic volume at the rear of the building. The entire first floor of this elevation has rusticated, rock-faced, concrete block walls. The center portion of the west façade has a shed-roofed side porch with simple 4" by 4" posts. Under the porch is an altered historic entry with a wide concrete lintel and keystone. The entry has been infilled with a single modern door, plywood, and a set of non-historic wood stairs to the new door. The configuration of alterations here suggests that the side entry once contained double doors and a transom window. South of this entry are two window openings, one of which is original and retains its lintel and keystone, and the other of which lacks a lintel and thus appears to be an alteration. Both windows contain a non-historic sash. Immediately south of the side porch is a wide exterior chimney made of rock-faced concrete block. The chimney has a wider, buttress-like base and a rectangular stack. The original chimney terminated at a concrete coping; however, the height of the chimney was extended by approximately two feet by the construction of a rubble stone section. According to a prior documentation of the property prepared by Bob Wamsley in 1982,

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

the rubble cap on the chimney was added in 1943 and contains the inscription, “LeRoy Christensen 1943.”<sup>2</sup> South of the chimney near the building’s front corner is a single window opening with non-historic sash. The north end of the west side elevation corresponds to the west wall of a small, gabled volume that extends from the building’s rear elevation. There is a single square window opening on its west wall. The opening retains the historic lintel and keystone but has been infilled with wood. The upper floor of the west side elevation has two stuccoed, gabled dormers on the west roof plane. The gabled tip of the east-west oriented building volume appears just above the ridgeline of the west roof.

The rear (north) of the house had two distinct sections – the historic, gabled, projecting section to the west and a shed-roofed section across the eastern two-thirds of the elevation. The shed-roofed section appears to be either an altered, enclosed, rear porch or a small, rear addition. The historic portion on the west side has rock-faced concrete block walls, a single window opening with concrete lintel and non-historic window sash, and a steeply-pitched, stucco, gable end with faux half-timbering. The gable end also contains a small louvered vent that matches the vent on the building’s east elevation. The shed-roofed section on the east has stucco walls and a central single-entry door flanked by two non-historic window openings. Over the entry door, the shed-roof plane is broken by a central, decorative gable with a louvered gable vent.

A small, square, wood-frame storage structure (~36 ft<sup>2</sup>) is located in the southeast (front) corner of the lot. The structure is constructed of plywood and has a pyramidal roof sheathed in rolled asphalt. The structure, constructed in 1989, has three window openings on its west, south, and east facades, and a north-facing entry. Additionally, a small (~105 ft<sup>2</sup>) wood-frame garbage shelter with corrugated metal shed roof, is located in the northeast (rear) corner of the lot. Electronic communications with the property’s current caretaker, Julia Occhiogrosso, conducted on September 5, 2023, confirm that the structure was located on the property in 2001.<sup>3</sup>

### Interior

The interior of the Christensen House was heavily altered in 1989, shortly after being purchased and converted for its current use as transitional housing. According to a Nevada State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) historic property inventory form completed in 1982, the interior was in “fair condition” with plastered walls, hardwood floors, and central heating and air-conditioning. The ground floor had a sunken dining room, a living room with a fireplace, a kitchen, den, and bathroom. Upstairs were two small bedrooms and a bathroom. The basement was “one small room.”<sup>4</sup> Currently, only the living room with fireplace and sunken dining room retain their original sizes and locations within the house; however, the kitchen and den area were combined into one, large, commercial kitchen space with plaster walls and vinyl composite floor

<sup>2</sup> Bob Wamsley. (1982). *Historic Properties Inventory Form: 500 W. Van Buren Avenue*. B886. Nevada Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology.

<sup>3</sup> J. Occhiogrosso, personal communication, September 5, 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Bob Wamsley. (1982). *Historic Properties Inventory Form: 500 W. Van Buren Avenue*. B886. Nevada Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

tiles.<sup>5</sup> The living room retains most of its historic character with exposed plaster walls and wood floor. The fireplace mantel is a plain projecting box finished with plaster. Four square openings, two on the top outer corners, and two on the bottom outer corners, provide air flow. The firebox has a steel surround and a projecting box in the center with a set of arched doors. The hearth consists of 8" by 8" terra cotta tiles set onto the hardwood floor. The basement is small at 341 ft<sup>2</sup> and lined with wood and metal shelves stocked with supplies. The basement walls are plastered, the ceiling has exposed wood beams and the floor is concrete.

In spite of exterior alterations, the Christensen House retains its integrity of feeling and association, as well as the majority of its integrity of design and workmanship. Alterations to the building's exterior, modern construction on the home's periphery, and demolitions and new development affecting the surrounding urban landscape, have compromised its integrity of materials and setting. However, the building is still able to convey its significance as a 1930s French Eclectic home constructed by prominent citizens in the Westside.

---

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒

A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐

B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☐

C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐

D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

☒

A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes

☐

B. Removed from its original location

---

<sup>5</sup> It is not known if the second floor retains its historical floor plan as access to the upstairs was prohibited due to privacy concerns for current residents.



Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HERITAGE/Black  
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

**Period of Significance**

1938-1976

**Significant Dates**

1938

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Leroy Christensen

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

### Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Christensen House is significant under Criterion A at the local level in the areas of *Ethnic Heritage/Black* and *Community Planning and Development* for its association with the development of the African American community in Las Vegas in the early- to mid-twentieth century. The period of significance for the property begins in 1938, when the home's original owner—Leroy Christensen—began construction on the residence, and ends in 1976, when Leroy's widow, Carrie Christensen, sold the property to new owners. During their occupancy, Leroy and Carrie Christensen were influential members of the Westside neighborhood—a predominantly African American community that formed on the west side of the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake (SPLA&SL) (later Union Pacific) railroad in the early 1900s. The Christensen House was one of the first permanent single-family residences constructed in the Westside and is one of only a few remaining pre-World War II (WWII) residences in the area. Since 1989, the Christensen House has been used as transitional housing by the Las Vegas Catholic Worker, a charitable organization affiliated with the Catholic Church. For this reason, the Christensen House is also recognized under Criteria Consideration A.

---

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

#### **Criterion A** **Ethnic Heritage/Black**

The Christensen House is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of *Ethnic Heritage/Black* for its role as a social gathering place for the emerging middle class African American community in the Westside during the post-World War II period. The property was identified as the result of an intensive level survey to identify and document African American resources located in West Las Vegas as part of the National Park Service's Underrepresented Community Grant (URC) Program. The results of the survey indicated that the Christensen House was an exceptional property within the Westside community, representing one of the earliest and most visually striking examples of middle-class residential construction remaining in the neighborhood.

The Christensen House was constructed in 1938 by Leroy Christensen, one of the city's pioneer African American residents. Christensen, a mechanic and carpenter, and his wife, Carrie, were emblematic of the Black middle class that drove the Westside's economic development and later served as a catalyst for civil rights organization in the city. Not only did the couple's stylish residence generate a sense of pride for the local community, but it also frequently served as the location for neighborhood events and functioned as a social hub for middle-class African Americans in the Westside.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

## Criterion A

### Community Planning and Development

The Christensen House also has significance at the local level under Criterion A in the area of *Community Planning and Development* for its association with residential growth in the Westside during the mid-twentieth century. The construction of the Christensen House occurred during a transitional time in the Westside's history that was enhanced by the economic prosperity of the post-WWII period. Prior to the house's construction, residences occupied by African American families in the Westside generally consisted of a scattered collection of tents, shacks, and other temporary structures. The Christensen House was among the first permanent homes constructed in the neighborhood and is representative of the way in which the newly emerging and economically empowered African American middle class worked to develop their own version of suburban homeownership amid a period of widespread discrimination and residential segregation in other parts of the city.

## Criterion Consideration A Religious Properties

For the majority of its history, the Christensen House was used as a single-family residence; however, in 1989, the house was purchased by the Las Vegas Catholic Worker, a charitable organization affiliated with the Catholic Church. The organization currently uses the house as transitional housing.

### Additional Information

#### Development of the Westside Neighborhood

The first sustained Euro-American settlement in the Las Vegas Valley occurred in 1855 when a group of Mormon missionaries established a small fort along the Las Vegas Creek in an area directly east of the Westside. The occupation of the fort was short-lived, having been all but abandoned by 1858.<sup>6</sup> After the Civil War, the remaining infrastructure of the Mormon settlement was acquired by Octavius Decatur Gass, who established the "Los Vegas Rancho" as a commercial hub along the Santa Fe Trail. When Gass defaulted on debts in 1882, the Rancho was acquired by Archibald and Helen Stewart. Helen Stewart operated the ranch until 1902 when she sold 1,800 acres of land to Senator William Clark of Montana, the owner of the SPLA&SL railroad. Clark had chosen Las Vegas as a diversion point for the proposed railroad line connecting Salt Lake City to Los Angeles.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Von Till Warren. (2001). "The History of Las Vegas Springs, A Disappeared Resource." PhD Dissertation. Pullman, Washington, Washington State University.

<sup>7</sup> Eugene P. Moehring and Michael S. Green. (2005). *Las Vegas: A Centennial History*. University of Nevada Press: Reno, Nevada.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

In 1902, Nevada pioneer and civil engineer J. T. McWilliams surveyed the property owned by Helen Stewart on behalf of the SPLA&SL railroad.<sup>8</sup> McWilliams immediately recognized the potential of the area and, in anticipation of an influx of railroad traffic, purchased 80 acres of the Stewart property on which to organize a townsite. By 1904, McWilliams had platted the “Original Plat, Townsite of Las Vegas,” on the west side of the SPLA&SL railroad alignment. A tent camp was erected and soon became the nucleus of a small settlement as businesses and residents flocked to the area (Figure 1). Unfortunately, in 1905, competition arose from “Clark’s Las Vegas Townsite,” a settlement platted by the Las Vegas Land and Water Company (LVL&WC), a subsidiary of the SPLA&SL railroad. Clark’s townsite was located on the east side of the rail line and had many advantages over the McWilliams’ plat, including a monopoly over the region’s water rights. Soon, residents and business owners began to abandon the McWilliams site in favor of the Clark townsite.<sup>9</sup> The residents who remained in the McWilliams townsite consisted mainly of low-income families who could not afford to relocate across the railroad tracks.



*Figure 1. McWilliams Townsite, ca. May 1905 (Photograph courtesy of Jacob E. Von Tobel Collection, UNLV, Las Vegas).*

When the City of Las Vegas was incorporated in June 1911 the city boundaries included the McWilliams Townsite; however, services had not yet been extended to the area, which was still effectively cut off from the rest of the city by the SPLA&SL rail line.<sup>10</sup> Despite the lack of

<sup>8</sup> Thomas J. Ainlay and Judy Dixon Green. (2003). *Las Vegas: The Fabulous First Century*. Arcadia Publishing: Chicago.

<sup>9</sup> Moehring and Green, *Las Vegas: A Centennial History*, p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 62.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

services, the McWilliams townsite offered inexpensive land that attracted an ethnically diverse population of low-income families who came to the area to work on the railroad. These disparate groups included Chinese, Mexicans, and African Americans who could not afford to purchase lots in the more affluent Clark townsite.<sup>11</sup> In the late 1920s, African American families began to arrive in the city in far greater numbers hoping to find employment helping to construct the Boulder (now Hoover) Dam. However, due to racially restrictive covenants in other areas of the city, most were forced to move into tents and shacks on the city's west side where overcrowding and meagre infrastructure led to unhealthy living conditions.

In the early 1930s, the Westside remained isolated from the expanding downtown core and was largely excluded from the city's growing prosperity. Additionally, the poor conditions in the Westside were exacerbated by New Deal-era programs that essentially prohibited African American families from participation. For example, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) that helped revitalize the residential construction industry during the Great Depression refused to insure mortgages for racial minorities.<sup>12</sup> This policy prevented African Americans in the Westside from obtaining mortgages to purchase new homes or loans to make needed improvements to existing structures. While construction of the Clark Avenue Railroad Underpass (NRIS #03001509) in 1936 opened a direct link from the Westside to downtown for the first time, the area continued to struggle economically due to a lack of police protection, telephone service, streetlights, paved streets, and adequate water delivery or sanitation. Despite the conditions in the neighborhood, city leaders and the LVL&WC still refused to act, citing limited funding, low land values, and sparse development that would not justify extending city services to the area.<sup>13</sup> Without adequate municipal services the Westside struggled to attract middle- and upper-income families during this period. For this reason, Leroy and Carrie Christensen were unique among Westside residents in the pre-WWII era. The construction, in 1938, of the Christensen family's large, French Eclectic style residence on W. Van Buren Avenue heralded the growth of the African American middle class and the suburbanization of the Westside that occurred later in the postwar period.

The breakout of World War II (WWII) in 1939 marked a turning point for the Westside community. The construction of the Las Vegas Army Air Corps Gunnery School (now Nellis Air Force Base), and the Basic Magnesium, Inc. (BMI) plant, turned Las Vegas into an important center of defense manufacturing and attracted more African American workers seeking employment in the defense industries. These newcomers found their way to the city's west side, where a majority African American neighborhood was beginning to emerge. The flood of African American defense industry workers led to increased discrimination from white residents of Las Vegas, however, and in 1943, Mayor Ernie Cragin began enforcing racial segregation in Las Vegas's downtown retail and casino districts by refusing to renew licenses for African

---

<sup>11</sup> Courtney Mooney. (2003). West Las Vegas Historic Resource Survey and Inventory, City of Las Vegas. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas Nevada.

<sup>12</sup> David Freund. (2007). *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois.

<sup>13</sup> Courtney Mooney. (2003). West Las Vegas Historic Resource Survey and Inventory, City of Las Vegas. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas Nevada.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House

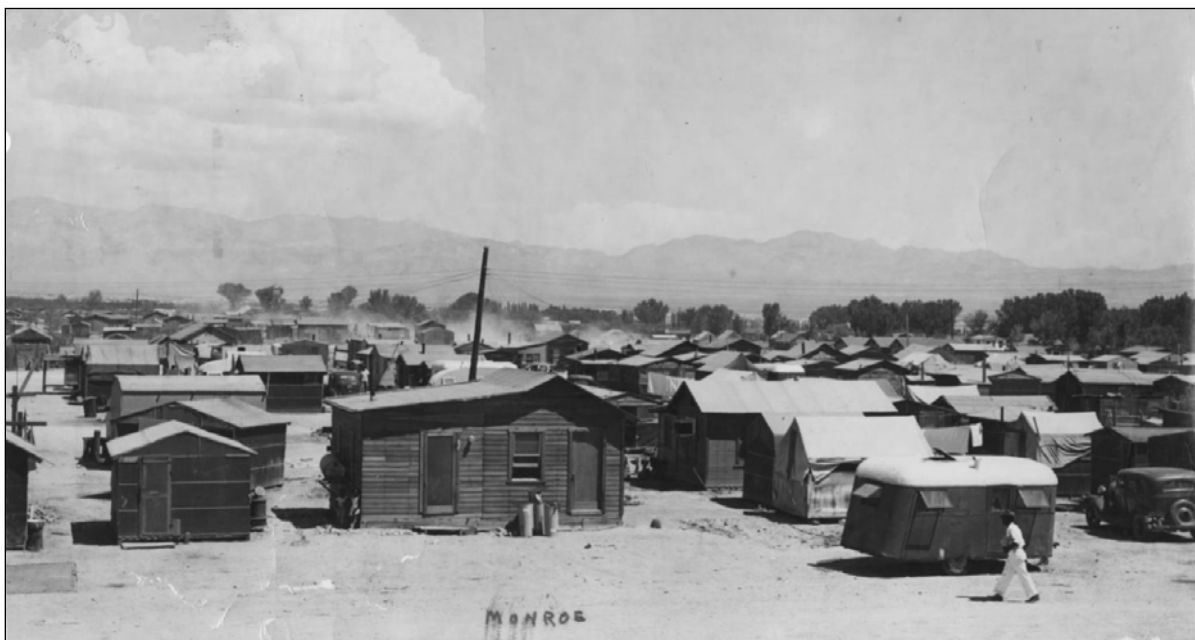
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada

County and State

American-owned businesses.<sup>14</sup> As a result, many African American business owners were forced to relocate to the Westside.

The African American families moving to the Westside during the 1940s were still met with substandard and unsanitary housing conditions (Figure 2). Minor improvements did little to remedy conditions in the neighborhood, and in the summer of 1943 a disastrous fire broke out that destroyed two dwellings and damaged two others. At the time, it was reported that the Westside still lacked sanitary facilities, fire protection, and that the whole area was liable to blow away in a strong wind.<sup>15</sup> The city responded by conducting a slum-clearance program between September 1944 and April 1945 that demolished roughly 375 substandard shacks and cabins in the Westside area. Displaced residents were not compensated for the destruction of their homes, and conditions in the area continued to deteriorate in the late 1940s.<sup>16</sup>



*Figure 2. Photograph of housing along Monroe Avenue in the Westside, ca. 1943 (Photograph courtesy of Milton Norman Collection, UNLV, Las Vegas).*

The lack of city investment prompted Westside residents to organize and petition local leaders for assistance. The community's religious leaders played an integral role in efforts to improve the neighborhood. Churches served as important meeting places and were able to organize and disseminate valuable information to the community. According to local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) President James McMillan, "the black churches

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> "Fire Spurs Westside Housing Drive." *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. June 9, 1943.

<sup>16</sup> Greta Rayle and Helana Ruter. (2015). World War II Era Residential Housing in Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada. LSD Technical Report No. 145648 Logan Simpson Design, Inc., Tempe, Arizona.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

proved to be the key to organizational success.”<sup>17</sup> In 1946, a group of citizens, headed by the Rev. W. H. Stevens, appealed to the city board for needed services, calling for the immediate installation of streetlights, street pavement, and fire plugs, and stressing that there were only 13 fire plugs in a 72-block area within the Westside area.<sup>18</sup>

While the Westside was struggling to provide adequate housing for its growing population during the 1940s, the business community in the neighborhood was beginning to flourish. African Americans helped to establish a prosperous community of minority-owned businesses in the neighborhood after being forced out of downtown and excluded from the economic boom occurring on the Las Vegas Strip. West Las Vegas developed its own grocery stores, gas stations, nightclubs, barbershops, liquor stores, and other retail businesses that fostered a vibrant minority community. Although businesses were spread throughout the neighborhood, the heart of the African American business district was Jackson Avenue, locally referred to as “Jackson Street.” The street was also known as the “Black Strip” because of the many nightclubs and hotels that catered to a largely African American clientele.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, the city’s strict segregation laws, which kept African Americans confined to the Westside, also applied to African American entertainers who visited the city. A cottage industry of Westside boarding houses developed to cater to visiting African American performers.

Finally, in the 1950s, population growth and community development on the Westside started to give way to a solid African American middle class, which finally prompted city officials to begin making residential improvements in the neighborhood. As early as 1947, the City of Las Vegas approached FHA officials about constructing the Westside Park, later Berkley Square Subdivision. At that time, the FHA recommended that the 30-acre parcel be divided into 158 lots and that covenants should be used to govern land use in the development. By the time the plat for Berkley Square was recorded in May 1954 the Veterans’ Administration was sponsoring the development. Berkley Square featured homes designed by African American architect Paul R. Williams and was the first minority-built subdivision in Nevada.<sup>20</sup> The development was followed by the construction of several more residential subdivisions built in the Westside as a result of the community growth and activism of the 1940s and 1950s (Figure 3).

The Civil Rights Movement within Las Vegas gained momentum during this period with the growth of the city’s African American middle class. Among the newcomers to the city were a new group of civil rights leaders, including Sarann Knight-Preddey, Lubertha Johnson, and Jimmy Gay, who began attending public hearings and lobbying city officials for improvements to street paving, fire plugs, and sewer upgrades in the Westside. The 1950s saw an influx of

---

<sup>17</sup> Earnest Bracey. (2003). *The Moulin Rouge and Black Rights in Las Vegas: A History of the First Racially Integrated Hotel-Casino*. Jefferson, North Carolina: MacFarland & Company Inc. Publishers.

<sup>18</sup> “Westside Residents Ask Relief from City.” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. February 8, 1946.

<sup>19</sup> Patricia Hershwitzky. (2011). *West Las Vegas*. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing. Library of Congress Control No. 2010934399.

<sup>20</sup> Diana Painter. (2007). National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Berkley Square Historic District, Las Vegas, Nevada. Painter Preservation and Planning.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State



*Figure 3. Larry Wilburn, owner of Larry's Music Bar at 1318 N. D Street, and his son, ca. 1966 (Photograph courtesy of Clinton Wright Negatives Collection, UNLV, Las Vegas).*

African American professionals into the city, further accelerating the push for civil rights.<sup>21</sup> In 1954, Dr. Charles West, the first African American doctor in Las Vegas, arrived in the Westside, followed the next year by Dr. James McMillan, the city's first African American dentist. McMillan was soon elected president of the Las Vegas NAACP chapter. The professional class was able to challenge the white community in ways that other long-established residents could not.<sup>22</sup>

By 1955, the population of the Westside had grown to 16,000 people. The community had an established business district and a strong group of civic and religious leaders. That year, the Moulin Rouge Hotel and Casino opened at 900 W. Bonanza Road (Figure 4). The Moulin Rouge was the first integrated hotel casino in the country.<sup>23</sup> While the Moulin Rouge was only open for a few months before closing due to financial issues, it served as a catalyst for civil rights organization in the Westside community.

<sup>21</sup> Claytee White. (2004). "The March that Never Happened: Desegregating the Las Vegas Strip." *Nevada Law Journal*, Vol. 5, Issue 1. Electronic document <https://scholars.law.unlv.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1308&context=nlj> accessed March 23, 2023.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Earnest Bracey. (2003). *The Moulin Rouge and Black Rights in Las Vegas: A History of the First Racially Integrated Hotel-Casino*.



Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State



Figure 4. Exterior photograph of the Moulin Rouge shortly after its construction, ca. 1955  
(Photograph courtesy of Union Pacific Railroad Photo Collection, UNLV, Las Vegas).

Beginning in the mid-1950s, civil rights organization in the Westside was also spurred by federal highway construction projects that targeted minority neighborhoods where land values were cheaper, and residents had little political power. Shortly after the passage of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, city engineers began working on plans to create a large, four-lane highway to replace the old Highway 91 route (later S. Fifth Street, followed by Las Vegas Boulevard) into Las Vegas. While everyone recognized the benefits of a federal interstate highway for the city, the decision about where to construct the project proved more challenging. Mayor C.D. Baker supported building the highway through the city's Westside and opposed alternative routes that would cut through the city's southern and eastern suburbs. Publicly, Baker argued that the proposed suburban routes were unsuitable because they would overload residential city streets. However, underlying his decision was the fact that a suburban highway would pass through white residential areas, causing widespread political fallout.<sup>24</sup>

On July 11, 1957, Westside residents protested the proposed freeway at a public hearing. Residents were afraid that social problems would develop in their neighborhood if the freeway was allowed to cut the area in half and force residents from their homes. In response to the concerns of Westside residents, officials, "pointed out that engineering on the freeway would

<sup>24</sup> Moehring and Green, *Las Vegas: A Centennial History*, p. 147.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

probably take at least two years... and this would give the residents time to work out whatever social problems might arise.”<sup>25</sup> Despite the community’s concerns, a week later, on July 18, city leaders officially designated the so-called “West Line” as the official route of the interstate highway through Las Vegas.<sup>26</sup>

The construction of the freeway bisected the Westside neighborhood, leading to widespread demolition of residential housing and the displacement of hundreds of residents in the community. Studies anticipated the relocation of 250 families whose homes were in the direct path of the freeway and recommended that 600 housing units be provided to accommodate residents whose homes would be demolished. The demolition and relocation of Westside residents began in 1957; however, the project was not completed until 1964 (Figure 5).<sup>27</sup>



*Figure 5. Photograph of the residence at 908 B Street, following its demolition, ca. 1962 (Photograph courtesy of Milton Norman Collection, UNLV, Las Vegas).*

Tired of the racially motivated policies that unfairly targeted the city’s African American community, local civil rights leaders renewed their calls to end segregation in the late 1950s. In March 1960, NAACP President James McMillan threatened Las Vegas Mayor Oran Gragson

<sup>25</sup> Opposition Developing to West Line Freeway Route.” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. July 11, 1957.

<sup>26</sup> West Line Now Official Route of Federal Highway Through LV.” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. July 18, 1957.

<sup>27</sup> Blighted Buildings are Vegans Homes.” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. September 17, 1972.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

with a massive protest if the city's gaming industry did not end discriminatory practices against African Americans. On the morning of Saturday, March 26, members of the Westside's African American community met with Mayor Gragson, Nevada Governor Grant Sawyer, and *Las Vegas Sun Newspaper* owner Hank Greenspun at the Moulin Rouge to discuss an agreement to integrate the Las Vegas Strip. After several hours of negotiations, the group was able to come to an agreement to desegregate the city's hotels and casinos (Figure 6).<sup>28</sup>



*Figure 6. Photograph of meeting at the Moulin Rouge to end segregation on the Las Vegas Strip, 1960 (Photograph courtesy of Marie McMillan Collection, UNLV, Las Vegas).*

While the civil rights advances of the 1960s and 1970s created new opportunities for the African American residents of Las Vegas outside of the city's Westside community, the area's once thriving business district faced an economic decline as African Americans were no longer confined to the Jackson Avenue strip.<sup>29</sup> Middle class African Americans, tired of the neglect and destructive policies targeting the Westside, began to abandon the area in favor of better living conditions in other parts of the city. The economic downturn in the Westside was replicated in African American communities across the country, as population decreases led to disinvestment that perpetuated the physical decline of minority neighborhoods.

<sup>28</sup> Earnest Bracey. (2003). *The Moulin Rouge and Black Rights in Las Vegas: A History of the First Racially Integrated Hotel-Casino*.

<sup>29</sup> Courtney Mooney. (2003). West Las Vegas Historic Resource Survey and Inventory, City of Las Vegas. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, Las Vegas Nevada.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

Since the 1970s, the Westside has been plagued by an increasing number of abandoned buildings, vacant lots, and deteriorating infrastructure. Over the past several decades, demolition of dilapidated structures has become widespread, particularly in older residential areas—such as the H.F.M. and M Addition—which are situated in close proximity to the freeway. For this reason, the Christensen House, with its exceptional architectural design and distinctive appearance, occupies a unique position as one of the earliest middle-class residences in the Westside, as well as one of the few remaining pre-WWII residences in the community.

### Development of the Leroy and Carrie Christensen House

Leroy Christensen was born on June 6, 1904, to Lucretia and Lawrence (Lars) Christensen in Fremont County, Idaho. According to the 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Lawrence was a native of Utah and was employed as a farmer.<sup>30</sup> His race, according to the census, was white. Leroy's mother was Lucretia Tanner Christensen, a native of Salt Lake City, Utah. Although Lucretia was from a multiracial background, the 1900 U.S. Census identifies her as Black.<sup>31</sup> Lawrence's father passed away suddenly in 1906 at the age of 32 when Leroy was just two years old.

By 1912, Lucretia was living in Idaho Falls with her two sons Ray and Leroy. That year, she got remarried to Ernest (Earn) Stevens.<sup>32</sup> By 1920, the Stevens/Christensen families lived in Twin Falls, Idaho.<sup>33</sup> The 1920 U.S. Federal Census indicates that Leroy was approximately 15 years old at that time. Interestingly, the 1920 census misidentifies the entire family's ethnicity as "Mexican." The census recorded the occupation of his stepfather, Earn, as a laborer at a "loading house" and his older brother, Ray, as working at the UC Ranch.<sup>34</sup> The family had added several more children by that time, including Leroy's younger brother, Orien, as well as two younger sisters. Three years later, in 1923, the family relocated to Las Vegas, Nevada, where they joined the city's burgeoning African American community in the Westside.<sup>35</sup>

By 1930, the Stevens/Christensen family is listed as living in Las Vegas at 646 N. Fourth Street in the Biltmore neighborhood. According to the U.S. Federal Census conducted that year, Leroy and his stepfather were both employed as laborers performing "odd jobs."<sup>36</sup> The 1930 census correctly identifies the family's race as "negro." Within a few years, 25-year-old Leroy got a job as a stationary fireman for the Union Pacific (UP) Railroad, where he also played baseball for the

<sup>30</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Twelfth Census of the United States. 1900. Record Group 29. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. Electronic document on file at <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/19319630:7602>, accessed March 24, 2023.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Idaho, Marriages, 1878-1898; 1903-1942. Salt Lake City, Utah: Family Search, 2013. Electronic document on file at <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/86797:60274>, accessed March 24, 2023.

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Fourteenth Census of the United States. 1920. Record Group 29. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. Electronic document on file at <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/8501965:6061>, accessed March 24, 2023.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> "Pioneer Las Vegas Sees Town Grow." *Las Vegas Sun*. February 9, 1965.

<sup>36</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Fifteenth Census of the United States. 1930. Record Group 29. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. Electronic document on file at <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/107843800:6224>, accessed March 24, 2023.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House

Name of Property

Clark, Nevada

County and State

company team.<sup>37</sup> Christensen may have gotten this job through his half-brother, Orien Stevens, who had been employed by the railroad since 1925.<sup>38</sup>

In July 1933, Leroy married Carrie L. Moody in Reno, Nevada.<sup>39</sup> It is unclear how Leroy and Carrie met; however, they were both members of the Church of Christ Holiness (Figure 7). At the time of his marriage, Leroy was employed as a mechanic at the El Rio garage.<sup>40</sup> A newspaper article in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* indicates that Leroy and Carrie lived on S. Fifth Street (now E Street) as early as 1935; however archival research suggests that the home at 500 W. Van Buren Avenue was not built by Christensen until 1938.<sup>41</sup>



*Figure 7. Photograph of Leroy and Carrie Christensen, ca. 1930-1940 (Photograph courtesy of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker, Las Vegas, Nevada).*

<sup>37</sup> "Plan Funeral Services for Leroy Christensen." *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. February 15, 1953.

<sup>38</sup> "Pioneer Worked Union Pacific For Life." *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. September 23, 1973.

<sup>39</sup> "Marriage Licenses." *Nevada State Journal*. July 7, 1933.

<sup>40</sup> "Plan Funeral Services for Leroy Christensen." *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. February 15, 1953.

<sup>41</sup> "Youth Hurt When Hit by Auto Near Grammar School, Dies Yesterday." *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. October 2, 1953.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

On May 25, 1938, Leroy and Carrie acquired title to Lots, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 of Block 10 in the H.F.M. and M. addition—which includes the current location of the Christensen House—from M.M. Sweeney of the Pioneer Title and Insurance Company.<sup>42</sup> A month later, in June 1938, Leroy was issued a building permit, in the amount of \$2,000, to construct a residence at “Fifth and Van Buren, Westside...”<sup>43</sup> The house that Leroy built was one of the first permanent single-family residences built in the Westside. Although Leroy had no professional experience as an architect, he incorporated many elements of the French Eclectic architectural style into his home’s design and utilized durable building materials, such as rock form concrete block and locally sourced river cobbles that were obtained from the nearby railroad yard.<sup>44</sup>

In 1942, Leroy’s WWII draft registration card provides his address as “West Fifth and Van Buren,” suggesting that the couple lived in the house by that time.<sup>45</sup> Leroy’s occupation in 1942 is listed as the El Portal Theater in Las Vegas. Later that same year, the couple purchased Lot 5 of Block 10 in the H.F.M. and M. addition from Leroy’s mother and stepfather. A date of “1942,” inscribed on the home’s chimney, suggests that the house underwent some renovations that year.<sup>46</sup> Two years later, in 1944, the couple welcomed twin sons, Lloyd Keith and Loyal Kenneth Christensen.

Following the birth of their children, Leroy and Carrie Christensen joined an emerging population of middle-class African Americans on the Westside. Like many middle-class residents of the neighborhood, the couple were actively engaged in the life of the community. Leroy, in particular, joined numerous civic organizations and held several community leadership positions throughout the 1940s and into the 1950s. In 1944, Leroy was elected to serve as the assistant chairman of the Westside USO.<sup>47</sup> He also served as president of the Westside Federal Credit Union, was a member of the Las Vegas Art League, and was an active member in the Community Concert Association and the Ministerial Alliance.<sup>48</sup> He served as deacon, trustee, and assistant pastor of the Pilgrim Church of Christ Holiness, located at 1515 D Street in the Westside. The Christensen home also frequently served as a community gathering place for residents of the Westside community. In the late 1940s, the Christensen family hosted lawn parties at their “beautiful home” at 500 W. Van Buren Avenue that included swimming in the family’s private pool.<sup>49</sup> In 1948, a televised fashion show was produced at the Christensen

---

<sup>42</sup> Clark County Recorder. Warranty Deed to Lots 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 of the H.F.M. and M. Addition. Deed Book 24 Page 435.

<sup>43</sup> “Building Permits \$30,200 for June.” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. June 8, 1938.

<sup>44</sup> “Preservation.” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. April 9, 2022.

<sup>45</sup> National Archives at St. Louis; St. Louis, Missouri; WWII Draft Registration Cards for Nevada. Records of the Selective Service System, 147, Box 6. Electronic document on file at <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/13439396:2238>, accessed March 24, 2023.

<sup>46</sup> “The Christensen House” compiled by the Las Vegas Catholic Worker. Electronic document on file at <http://christensenhouse.lvcw.org/resources/Christensen%20House%20History.pdf>, accessed March 24, 2023.

<sup>47</sup> “New Officers Are Elected by USO.” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. November 27, 1944.

<sup>48</sup> “Plan Funeral Services for Leroy Christensen.” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. February 15, 1953.

<sup>49</sup> “Westside News.” *Las Vegas Age*. August 17, 1947.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House

Name of Property

Clark, Nevada

County and State

House that featured local celebrity, and later Moulin Rouge casino owner, Sarann Knight-Preddey (Figure 8).<sup>50</sup>



*Figure 8. Photograph of Sarann Knight-Preddey modeling in front of the Christensen House, ca. 1948 (Photograph courtesy of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker, Las Vegas, Nevada).*

By 1950, the U.S. Federal Census lists the occupants of 500 W. Van Buren Avenue as Leroy Christensen, his wife Carrie, and their 6-year-old sons.<sup>51</sup> Leroy was 45 years old and was working as a custodian at the First National Bank. His wife, Carrie, was 46 and was employed as a “kitchen helper” at a drug store.<sup>52</sup> The family’s race is again identified as “negro.” According to the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, during the early 1950s, Leroy also worked as a plasterer and carpenter and was employed by the Southern Nevada Telephone Company and the White Cross

<sup>50</sup> “The Christensen House” compiled by the Las Vegas Catholic Worker. Electronic document on file at <http://christensenhouselvcw.org/resources/Christensen%20House%20History.pdf>, accessed March 24, 2023.

<sup>51</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Seventeenth Census of the United States. 1950. Record Group 29. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. Electronic document on file at <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/78819:62308>, accessed March 24, 2023.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

Drug Store. In addition to his professional responsibilities, Leroy was also selected as the chairman of the Westside district of the Clark County chapter of the American Red Cross.<sup>53</sup>

Leroy remained actively involved in the Westside community until his untimely death in February 1953, at just 48 years old. The cause of death listed on his death certificate is a “coronary insufficiency.”<sup>54</sup> Leroy’s obituary noted that he lived with his family at 500 W. Van Buren Street, “...in a house that was constructed by him and...was considered one of the most picturesque and outstanding on the Westside.”<sup>55</sup>

Following her husband’s death Carrie Lee Christensen retained ownership of the family home and continued to occupy the residence with her two young sons. Little is known about Carrie’s activities following her husband’s death; however, a review of building permits available online through RISE, the city’s search engine for public records and information, indicates that she oversaw minor improvements to the home, including the installation of aluminum patio covers on the north (rear) and west facades of the building in 1974, and the construction of a shed-roof addition on the north facade.<sup>56</sup> Neither aluminum patio cover remains; however, the addition is still extant. Carrie continued to live at 500 W. Van Buren Avenue until 1976 when she sold the family home and returned to her native Kentucky.

The home’s new owners—Cornell and Myra Fields—quickly resold the property to Iva MacDonald and Lucille O’Brien just a year later.<sup>57</sup> O’Brien, a real estate agent, listed the property for rent in May 1978, describing it as a “privately fenced, 3 or 4 bedrooms, 2 baths, 2 story home with hardwood floors, formal dining room and fireplace.”<sup>58</sup> In July 1978, the house was purchased by Pedro Delgado and his son, Valiant. Later that year, a complaint was filed with the Las Vegas Building and Safety Division that referred to the home as an “attractive nuisance” and “dangerous,” suggesting that it had fallen into disrepair.<sup>59</sup> The Delgado family retained ownership of the property until at least 1983.

In 1989, the Christensen House was purchased from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by its current owner—the Las Vegas Catholic Worker. At the time of the sale, the house was abandoned and sold for just \$25,000.<sup>60</sup> The organization fully renovated the home for use as a transitional housing facility, including interior alterations to accommodate a

---

<sup>53</sup> “Red Cross Drive in County Passes Goal of \$27,000.” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. April 2, 1950.

<sup>54</sup> Nevada Department of Health; Carson City, Nevada; Nevada Death Records. Electronic document on file at <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/80697:60974>, accessed March 24, 2023.

<sup>55</sup> “Plan Funeral Services for Leroy Christensen.” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. February 15, 1953.

<sup>56</sup> City of Las Vegas Building Permits. (2023). Development Records [Data File]. Permits retrieved from <http://www5.lasvegasnevada.gov/sirepub/docs.aspx?tab=RD>, accessed March 24, 2023.

<sup>57</sup> “The Christensen House” compiled by the Las Vegas Catholic Worker. Electronic document on file at <http://christensenhouse.lvcw.org/resources/Christensen%20House%20History.pdf>, accessed March 24, 2023.

<sup>58</sup> “500 W Van Buren.” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. May 9, 1978.

<sup>59</sup> City of Las Vegas Building Permits. (2023). Development Records [Data File]. Permits retrieved from <http://www5.lasvegasnevada.gov/sirepub/docs.aspx?tab=RD>, accessed March 24, 2023.

<sup>60</sup> “The Christensen House” compiled by the Las Vegas Catholic Worker. Electronic document on file at <http://christensenhouse.lvcw.org/resources/Christensen%20House%20History.pdf>, accessed March 24, 2023.



Leroy and Carrie Christensen House

Name of Property

Clark, Nevada

County and State

larger kitchen and create office space. Exterior renovations included replacing the original wood shingle roof with modern composition shingles and restoring most of the original casement windows, particularly on the south (front) façade (Figure 9).<sup>61</sup> In recent years a few of the original casement windows were replaced with one-over-one double-hung windows.



*Figure 9. Photograph of the Christensen House shortly after it was rehabilitated by the Las Vegas Catholic Worker, ca. 1989 (Photograph courtesy of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker, Las Vegas, Nevada).*

The Christensen House, located at 500 W. Van Buren Avenue in Las Vegas, is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of *Ethnic Heritage/Black* for its role as a social gathering place for the city's African American community in the post-WWII period, and in the area of *Community Planning and Development* for its association with residential growth in the Westside during the mid-twentieth century. Since 1989, the property has been owned by the Las Vegas Catholic Worker, a religious charity organization. For this reason, the property is also recognized under Criterion Consideration A. The period of significance for the property begins in 1938, when Leroy Christensen first began construction on the residence, and ends in 1976, when his widow, Carrie Christensen, sold the home to new owners. The Christensen House is a unique property that represents one of the first permanent single-family residences constructed in

<sup>61</sup> According to representatives of the organization managing the property, the large, multi-lite, steel-frame window on the west side of the front (south) façade is a like-for-like replacement; however, it was also noted that the stone lintel is narrower than the current window, suggesting the original window was much smaller.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

the Westside and is one of only a few remaining pre-World War II (WWII) residences in the area.

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Ainlay, Thomas J. and Judy Dixon Gabaldon

2003 *Las Vegas: The Fabulous First Century*. Arcadia Publishing, Chicago.

City of Las Vegas Building Permits

2023 Development Records [Data file]. Permits retrieved from  
<http://www5.lasvegasnevada.gov/sirepub/docs.aspx?tab=RD>.

Las Vegas Review-Journal

1938 "Building Permits \$30,200 for June." *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. July 8, p.7.

1953 "Plan Funeral Services for Leroy Christensen." *Las Vegas Review-Journal*.  
February 15, p.3.

Moehring, Eugene P. and Michael S. Green

2005 *Las Vegas: A Centennial History*. University of Nevada Press, Reno, Nevada.

Mooney, Courtney

2003 West Las Vegas Historic Resource Survey and Inventory, City of Las Vegas. 20<sup>th</sup>  
Century Preservation, Las Vegas Nevada.

Wamsley, Bob

1982 *Historic Properties Inventory Form: 500 W. Van Buren Avenue*. B886, Nevada  
Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology.

---

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

\_\_\_ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

\_\_\_ previously listed in the National Register

\_\_\_ previously determined eligible by the National Register

\_\_\_ designated a National Historic Landmark

\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

---

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 0.19

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927    or    ☒ NAD 1983

- |              |                  |                   |
|--------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 11N | Easting: 666461  | Northing: 4006327 |
| 2. Zone: 11N | Easting: 666478  | Northing: 4006328 |
| 3. Zone: 11N | Easting: 666462  | Northing: 4006283 |
| 4. Zone: 11N | Easting : 666479 | Northing: 4006285 |

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property is bounded by W. Van Buren Avenue to the south; an unnamed alley to the north; N. E Street to the east, and the eastern property boundary for Parcel 139-27-110-043 to the west.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary corresponds to the parcel boundary for APN 139-27-110-044.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title:

Architectural Historian Courtney Mooney, M.S., AICP and Historian Kasey Fulwood,  
M.A.

organization: North Wind Resource Consulting, LLC

street & number: 1717 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 2

city or town: Tempe state: AZ zip code: 85281

e-mail courtney.mooney@northwindgrp.com; kasey.fulwood@northwindgrp.com

telephone: 702-858-3885

date: February 3, 2023

---

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5- or 15-minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

### **Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered, and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### **Photo Log**

Name of Property: Leroy and Carrie Christensen House

City or Vicinity: Las Vegas

County: Clark

State: Nevada

Photographer: Courtney Mooney, M.S., AICP

Date Photographed: July 13, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photograph #1 South (front) facade of Christensen House, facing north (Courtney Mooney, North Wind Resource Consulting, 2022).

Photograph #2 Detail of round tower on south (front) facade of Christensen House, facing northwest (Courtney Mooney, North Wind Resource Consulting, 2022).

Photograph #3 Porch on south (front) facade of Christensen House, facing west (Courtney Mooney, North Wind Resource Consulting, 2022).

Photograph #4 North (rear) facade of Christensen House, facing southeast (Courtney Mooney, North Wind Resource Consulting, 2022).

Photograph #5 West facade of Christensen House, showing porch and chimney, facing southeast (Courtney Mooney, North Wind Resource Consulting, 2022).

Photograph #6 East facade of Christensen House, facing northwest (Courtney Mooney, North Wind Resource Consulting, 2022).

Photograph #7 West facade of Christensen House, showing detail of chimney facing northeast (Courtney Mooney, North Wind Resource Consulting, 2022).

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House

Name of Property

Clark, Nevada

County and State

Photograph #8 Interior of dining room at Christensen House, facing east (Courtney Mooney, North Wind Resource Consulting, 2022).

Photograph #9 Interior of kitchen at Christensen House, facing east (Courtney Mooney, North Wind Resource Consulting, 2022).

Photograph #10 Interior of living room at Christensen House, facing southwest (Courtney Mooney, North Wind Resource Consulting, 2022).

Photograph #11 Original fireplace on west wall of the living room (Courtney Mooney, North Wind Resource Consulting, 2022).

Photograph #12 Small wood frame shed at south end of the property, facing southeast (Courtney Mooney, North Wind Resource Consulting, 2022).

Photograph #13 Wood frame garbage shelter, constructed in 2001, in the northwest corner of the rear (north) yard, facing southwest (Courtney Mooney, North Wind Resource Consulting, 2023).

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State



Photograph 1. South (front) facade of Christensen House, facing north.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State



Photograph 2. Detail of round tower on south (front) facade of Christensen House, facing northwest.



Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State



Photograph 3. Porch on south (front) facade of Christensen House, facing west.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State



Photograph 4. North (rear) facade of Christensen House, facing southeast.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State



Photograph 5. West facade of Christensen House, showing porch and chimney, facing southeast.



Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State



Photograph 6. East facade of Christensen House, facing northwest.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State



Photograph 7. West facade of Christensen House, showing detail of chimney facing northeast.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State



Photograph 8. Interior of dining room at Christensen House, facing east.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State



Photograph 9. Interior of kitchen at Christensen House, facing east.



Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State



Photograph 10. Interior of living room at Christensen House, facing southwest. Note original fireplace.



Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State



Photograph 11. Original fireplace on west wall of the living room.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State



Photograph 12. Small wood frame shed, constructed in 1989, in the southeast corner of the front (south) yard, facing southeast.

Leroy and Carrie Christensen House

Name of Property

Clark, Nevada

County and State



Photograph 13. Wood garbage shelter, constructed in 2001, in the northwest corner of the rear (north) yard, facing southwest.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

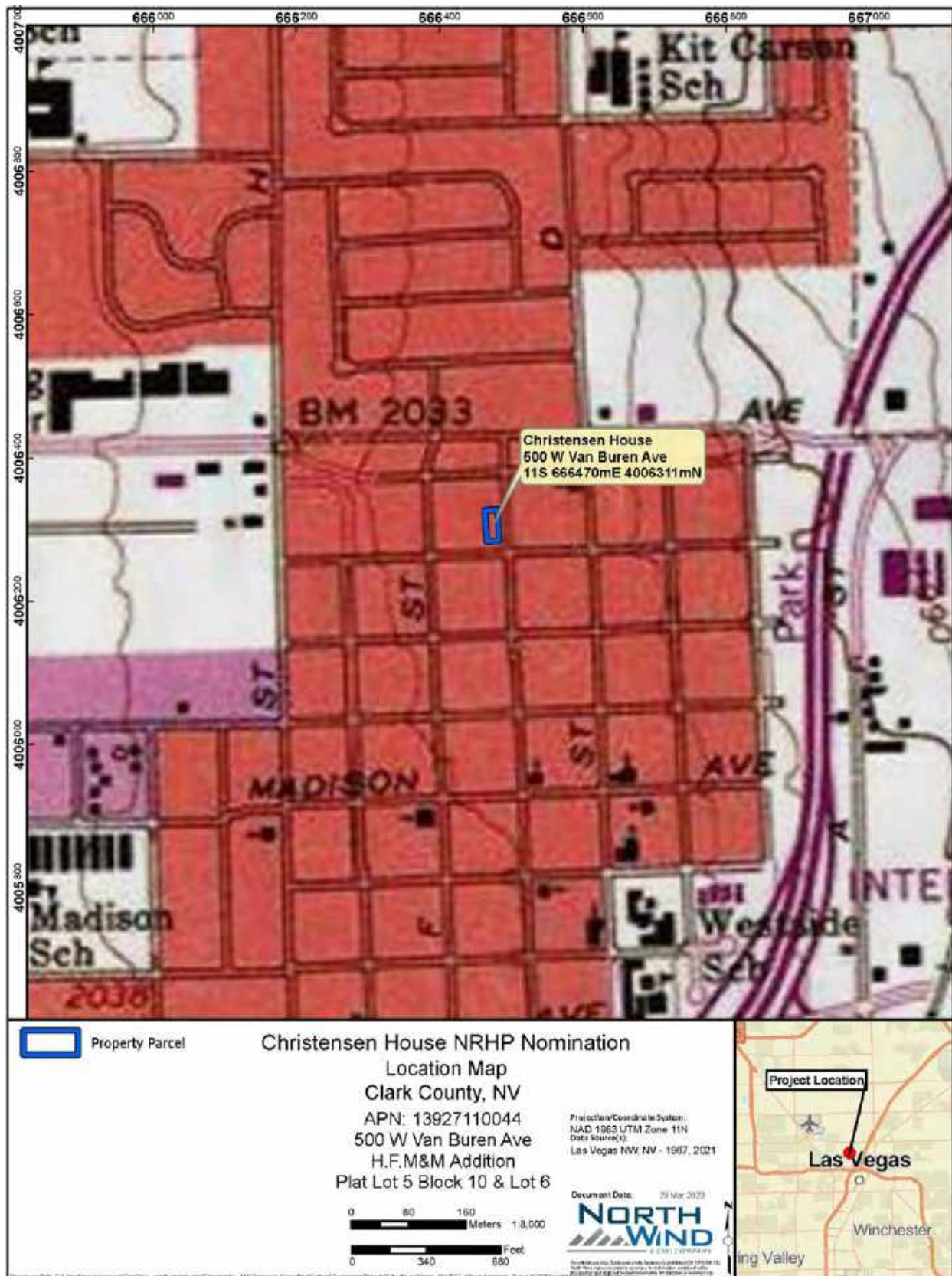
- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.



Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State



Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State





Leroy and Carrie Christensen House  
Name of Property

Clark, Nevada  
County and State

